

## **Strategy 1: Create an Artist's Image Palette**

**To get a sense of the variety of images authors use, students can construct an "Artist's Image Palette," a collection of words and phrases used by professional authors to create powerful mental images. Give students the option of working in pairs or independently and ask them to search for powerful images written by favorite authors. Next, have them group these phrases in one of the several categories suggested in the handout that follows. Distribute an "Artist's Image Palette" to guide students.**

# **Artist's Image Palette**

## **Assignment (Part 1)**

Using a book by any author you have read this year or last, construct a palette of images used by that writer. Your images can range from one-word selections to four or five word phrases. After you have collected at least fifty images (half of which may be single words), classify them in one of the following categories or in categories of your own design:

- **Mood:** reflective, humorous, fearful, stressful, relaxed, anxious, nervous, loving, angry, etc.
- **Activity:** conflict descriptions (interactions with others, nature, animals, and so on), setting descriptions (city scenes, country scenes, wilderness scenes, interior scenes), character descriptions (facial features, dress, speech, actions).
- **Traditional parts of speech:** noun images (people, places, buildings, objects, animals), verb images (actions, movements), adjective images (characteristics such as color, shape, size, sensory details).
- **Brush strokes:** appositives, absolutes, participles, adjectives out of order, action verbs.

Also, you may choose to work with a partner, but each of you must contribute 50 images for a combined list of 100.

## **Assignment (Part 2)**

Write a short descriptive paragraph mixing between 10 and 20 words from your artist's palette with 30 to 60 of your own. If you are working with a partner, each of you must create your own paragraph, but you may both use your combined list.

It is important for teachers to keep a balance between writing exercises and plagiarism. Chapter 4 provides guidelines for this purpose and further clarifies the rationale behind these strategies.

Below are excerpts from one such assignment, written by teacher Tina Hughes for an in-service workshop. Tina's complete palette included a list of 150 images. Featured here is just a sampling to illustrate how the artist's palette works.

### Sample Artist's Image Palette

#### Images from A Wrinkle in Time by Madeline L'Engle

<b>Movement</b>  scudded frantically feet padding softly as a kitten fluttered up from her chair sitting like statues gushed from her eyes rhythmic and flowing as a dance	<b>Character Descriptions</b>  strong, gentle fingers glasses perched on his nose gleam of avid curiosity eyelids sagged hair stringing about her face nose a round soft blob
<b>Moods</b>  prickles of apprehension flushed with rage sullen fury merry fire savagely perturbed	<b>Parts of Speech</b>  puny little brains delighted smile sweet autumnal smell tingling faintly jangling grimly

Blending her own words with touches of images from A Wrinkle in Time, Tina created an original description, a paragraph of which is excerpted here. Words taken from the Artist's Palette are underlined.

The teacher felt prickles of apprehension as she awaited the start of another year-long adventure. A heavy, sweet, autumnal smell floated through the opened windows as one final survey of the room revealed a state of readiness. The polished luster of the heavily waxed floor braced itself for the onslaught of the stampeding throngs of eager students. Reverberating through the halls, the jangling bell jolted the teacher from her moment of meditation.

Collecting written images builds the student's repertoire of techniques, allowing the student to play with word paintings of the masters and more clearly see how authors use brush strokes.